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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/851,410	05/07/2001	Gregory R. Reyes	4600-0183.26	2902
22918	7590	03/26/2004	EXAMINER	
PERKINS COIE LLP P.O. BOX 2168 MENLO PARK, CA 94026				MOSHER, MARY
		ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER
		1648		

DATE MAILED: 03/26/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/851,410	REYES ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Mary E. Mosher, Ph.D.	1648	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION IS [REDACTED]

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12/11/03, 8/24/01, 8/13/01, 2/19/02
2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 25-29 and 34-37 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 25-29 and 34-37 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application of the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(e)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 8/24/01.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election without traverse of group II, ORF2 protein or fragment, in Paper No. 12/11/2003 is acknowledged.

Claims 25-29 have been examined only to the extent that they read upon the elected ORF2 products.

Claim construction

Claims 25-29, 34-37 are all product-by-process claims. The process recited in base claim 25 requires a nucleic acid that is greater than 70% identical to SEQ ID NO: 6 and an expression vector comprising the nucleic acid; the vector is introduced into a host cell, and a protein is expressed. The claimed product is an isolated protein which is encoded by a HEV genome and which is prepared by this process. Note that SEQ ID NO: 6 is 7195 nucleotides long; this is nearly the full length of the HEV genome. Note also that ORF2 is found at the 3' end of SEQ ID NO: 6, downstream of the large ORF1. Note also that dependent claims 27 and 37 are drawn to protein fragments produced by the process, and claim 37 is drawn to a fragment when the process involves a viral expression vector.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

Claims 25-29, 34-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed,

had possession of the claimed invention. As discussed above, these are all product-by-process claims. The specification discloses the full structure of several species of ORF2 protein, and of several species of ORF2 protein fragments. However, the specification does not describe the process recited in these claims. As discussed above, the process involves placing a nucleic acid nearly the size of the full HEV genome in an expression vector. Nowhere in the specification is there any indication that this large an expression construct is contemplated. Nor is there discussion of how to make such an expression construct produce ORF2; this is not a trivial problem since ORF2 would be far downstream of any vector expression control sequences. Nor is there description of a process using a viral expression vector, only a process using a bacteriophage expression vector. Therefore, it is concluded that the process steps recited in the claims are not supported by the specification.

In addition, Zhang et al (Clinical and Diagnostic Laboratory Immunology 4:423-428, 1997) is cited as evidence that the process used to express HEV ORF2 protein can substantially affect the characteristics of the final product, particularly where the product is a fragment produced by intracellular processing. Therefore, since the specification fails to describe the process recited in the claims, the specification also fails to adequately describe the products produced by the process.

Claims 27 and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. These claims are drawn to an isolated protein which is a fragment of itself. This is logically impossible.

Double Patenting

A rejection based on double patenting of the "same invention" type finds its support in the language of 35 U.S.C. 101 which states that "whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process ... may obtain a patent therefor ..." (Emphasis added). Thus, the term "same invention," in this context, means an invention drawn to identical subject matter. See *Miller v. Eagle Mfg. Co.*, 151 U.S. 186 (1894); *In re Ockert*, 245 F.2d 467, 114 USPQ 330 (CCPA 1957); and *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970).

A statutory type (35 U.S.C. 101) double patenting rejection can be overcome by canceling or amending the conflicting claims so they are no longer coextensive in scope. The filing of a terminal disclaimer cannot overcome a double patenting rejection based upon 35 U.S.C. 101.

Claim 35 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 as claiming the same invention as that of claim 7 of prior U.S. Patent No. 5,824,649. This is a double patenting rejection. Although the two claims depend from parent claims with different limitations, both application claim 35 and patent claim 7 are drawn to the protein which has the sequence presented as SEQ ID NO. 8. Therefore the two claims are drawn to the same product, despite the difference in the parent claims.

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 25-29, 34, 36, 37 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-35 of U.S. Patent No. 5,824,649. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the instant product-by-process claims encompass the proteins which are the subject of the previously patented claims.

Claims 27 and 37 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 1 of U.S. Patent No. 5770689. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the instant claimed ORF2 fragments encompass the previously patented ORF2 fragments.

Priority

It is noted that this application appears to claim subject matter disclosed in prior Application No. 09/128,275, filed 8/3/1998. A reference to the prior application must be inserted as the first sentence of the specification of this application or in an application data sheet (37 CFR 1.76), if applicant intends to rely on the filing date of the prior application under 35 U.S.C. 119(e) or 120. See 37 CFR 1.78(a). For benefit claims under 35 U.S.C. 120, the reference must include the relationship (i.e., continuation, divisional, or continuation-in-part) of all nonprovisional applications. Also, the current status of all nonprovisional parent applications referenced should be included.

If the application is a utility or plant application filed under 35 U.S.C. 111(a) on or after November 29, 2000, the specific reference to the prior application must be submitted during the pendency of the application and within the later of four months

from the actual filing date of the application or sixteen months from the filing date of the prior application. If the application is a utility or plant application which entered the national stage from an international application filed on or after November 29, 2000, after compliance with 35 U.S.C. 371, the specific reference must be submitted during the pendency of the application and within the later of four months from the date on which the national stage commenced under 35 U.S.C. 371(b) or (f) or sixteen months from the filing date of the prior application. See 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(ii) and (a)(5)(ii). This time period is not extendable and a failure to submit the reference required by 35 U.S.C. 119(e) and/or 120, where applicable, within this time period is considered a waiver of any benefit of such prior application(s) under 35 U.S.C. 119(e), 120, 121 and 365(c). A priority claim filed after the required time period may be accepted if it is accompanied by a grantable petition to accept an unintentionally delayed claim for priority under 35 U.S.C. 119(e), 120, 121 and 365(c). The petition must be accompanied by (1) the reference required by 35 U.S.C. 120 or 119(e) and 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2) or (a)(5) to the prior application (unless previously submitted), (2) a surcharge under 37 CFR 1.17(t), and (3) a statement that the entire delay between the date the claim was due under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2) or (a)(5) and the date the claim was filed was unintentional. The Director may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional. The petition should be addressed to: Mail Stop Petition, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 25-29, 34-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Zhang et al (Clinical and Diagnostic Laboratory Immunology 4:423-428, 1997).

In making this rejection, applicants are denied the benefit of previously filed applications, for two reasons. One, the applications recited in the first paragraph of the specification are not copending with this application. Two, the prior applications do not describe the invention as now claimed, for the same reasons as discussed above under the "written description" rejection of the claims.

The Zhang publication teaches products made by the process of expression of ORF2 from a baculovirus vector. This is different from the process recited in the claim, because the claim process requires additional nucleotide sequences in the expression vector. However, since both processes produce ORF2 proteins or fragments encoded by an HEV genome, there is reason to believe that the end products are similar or identical. See In re Best, 562 F.2d 1252, 1255, 195 USPQ 430, 433-434 (CCPA 1977):

Where, as here, the claimed and prior art products are identical or substantially identical, or are produced by identical or substantially identical processes, the PTO can require an applicant to prove that the prior art products do not necessarily or inherently possess the characteristics of his claimed product. . . . Whether the rejection is based on 'inherency' under 35 U.S.C. § 102, on 'prima facie obviousness' under 35 U.S.C. § 103, jointly or alternatively, the burden of proof is the same, and its fairness is evidenced by the PTO's inability to manufacture products or to obtain and compare prior art products [footnote omitted].

Conclusion

The review by Aggarwal et al (Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology 15:9-20, 2000) is cited as illustrating the state of the art as of the 2001 filing date of this application. As of the filing date, those in the hepatitis E art were in possession of a variety of HEV genomic sequences which were 75-99% identical to SEQ ID NO: 6, and

were aware of methods of expressing HEV proteins and diagnostic and immunogenic uses for the proteins. Therefore, with a 2001 effective date, there is no basis for rejection of the claims for enablement or written description considerations.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mary E. Mosher, Ph.D. whose telephone number is 571-272-0906. The examiner can normally be reached on M-T and alternate F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, James Housel can be reached on 571-272-0902. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

3/25/04

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